JVST RE-PROPOSALS TO humble Propoſals.

OR,

An impartiall Conſideration of, and Anſwer unto, the Humble Propoſals, which are printed in the name of ſundry learned and pious Divines, concerning the Engagement which the Parliament hath ordered to be taken.

Shewing { *How far thoſe Propoſals are agreeable to Reaſon, to Chriſtianity, and to Policie.* / *How the Propoſers thereof may receive ſatisfaction therein, in all theſe reſpects.*

Hereunto are added, The Humble Propoſals themſelves; becauſe they are not currantly to be found.

Written by JOHN DURY.

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1 Cor. 10. 18. *Not he that commendeth himſelfe, is approved; but whom the Lord commendeth.*

January 7. 1650, *Imprimatur*, Joſeph Caryl.

London, Printed by *R. L.* for *Richard Wodenothe*, at the *Starre* under St. *Peters* Church in *Cornhill*, 1650.

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JVST RE-PROSALS
TO
Humble Propoſals.

SECT. I.

Concerning the ſcope of this Treatiſe.

IT is conceiv'd that theſe Propoſals contain the ſtrength of all thoſe Scruples, which the conſcientious, and hitherto otherwiſe wel-affected party towards the Cauſe of liberty and Reformation, hath taken up againſt the Engagement: and becauſe it is neither juſt nor conſcionable, that any matter ſhould be preſſed upon the Conſcience of any as a Duty, otherwiſe then by a clear demonſtration of the righteouſneſſe thereof, and a conviction of the judgement therein: nor can it with any probability be conceived, that the Parliament which with ſo much pious zeale and vigour, hath oppoſed the incroachments of Tyranny hitherto; ſhould now intend any preſſures upon any, which are not abſolutely neceſſary, or further then they are unavoydably requiſite for common ſafety; therefore it will be very expedient to endeavour the removing of theſe Scruples, as of ſtumbling-blocks out of the way of conſcionable men, whoſe aim is, to ſeek Peace and Unity in the Truth; & to offer by a juſt Re-propoſal, and more faithfull repreſentation of matters, ſome equitable ſatisfaction to theſe humble Propoſals.

The occaſion & inducement to write this Treatiſe.

The Scope thereof.

The things to be handled therin. And to this effect two things ſhall be weighed without prejudice, and taken into ſerious conſideration: Firſt, what ſtrength of Reaſon, and ſtrain of Chriſtianity is in theſe Propoſals. Secondly, what way may be followed, to bring the mindes of theſe Propoſers into a quiet frame, by the performance of theſe Duties which they themſelves acknowledge to be juſt, and which to the State will undoubtedly give ſatisfaction.

SECT. II.

The Summe and Subſtance of the Propoſals briefly, and in order.

THe Miniſters who have made theſe Propoſals, repreſent firſt themſelves unto us; and then their Scruples concerning the Engagement, for which they deſire to be excuſed from the Subſcription thereof.

In the Propoſals. Sect. 1. They repreſent themſelves in reference to that which is paſt, to that which is preſent, and to that which is their future reſolution. In reference to things paſt, they have faithfully ſerved the Parliament; they have ſuffered for the cauſe thereof in the purſuance of juſt liberty and reformation; and they have adhered to their firſt Principles unto this day.

In reference to things preſent, they are peaceable and obedient to the Lawes of the Nation; they endeavour with meekneſſe and humility to preſerve their inward peace, and outward ſafety; and they find themſelves ſtraightened in conſcience upon the caſe of the preſent Engagement.

In reference to future Reſolutions, they declare that they will behave themſelves according to theſe following Poſitions.

Sect. 2. 1. That although they hold themſelves ſtill bound by their former ſolemne Covenant and Engagements; yet that they are alſo convinced, that it is neceſſary ſome Civill Government ſhould be maintained in the Land.

2. That they count it agreeable to the will of God, to the light of nature, to the practiſe of all Chriſtians, to their own principles, and to their former Engagements; to own the changes

gees of Government, which Gods providence brings upon a Nation; when he diſables one, and inables another Government to afford protection to the people thereof.

3. That their owning of the Government will be by living quietly and peaceably in their places and callings under it; and by ſubmitting to ſuch things as are impoſed upon, or required of them by the Powers which are in actuall poſſeſſion; being things in themſelves lawful, and neceſſary for the preſervation of themſelves and others.

4. That all this may be done without diſputing the right and title of thoſe that are in place of Magiſtracy over them.

In theſe things they propoſe themſelves unto us; that we may know what they are, and what their ſenſe is of the preſent Government, and the ſubjection due thereunto,

Then in the ſecond place, they propoſe alſo what their ſcruples are, concerning a ſubſcription to the Engagement, which are of four ſorts. *viz.* 1. Of that which the words in themſelves ſeem to imply & import. 2. Of that where they relate to the violating of former Engagements. 3. Of that which is a matter of generall ſcandall & offence. 4. Of that which may become a ſnare unto the Subjects, and a prejudice unto the Rulers themſelves.

Concerning the ſenſe of the words, they ſcruple at them be- *Sect.* 3.
cauſe they ſeem to import (ſay they) things not to be aſſented unto. As

1. An Approbation of the preſent eſtabliſhment as effected by a full and free Authority.

2. A Ratification and Conſent of the people unto the Authority.

3. An Obligation to act at all times, in all places and capacities to the promoting and ſtrengthening of the Authority.

Concerning the violation of their former Oathes and Engage- *Sect.* 4.
ments; they declare from the words thereof, and the manner of taking the ſame; that ſuch an awfull impreſſion remaines upon their conſcience thereby, that except the conſiſtency of the Engagement be made unqueſtionably clear, with the ſolemne League and Covenant; that to enter into it will be utterly unlawfull unto them.

Concerning the matter of Scandall; they ſay that the taking of

Sect.5. of the Engagement being lookt upon, as an infringement of former Oaths, will blaſt the whole reputation of their perſons, and of their Miniſtery, and reflect with more diſ-advantage upon the Goſpel, then bring advantage to the State: for which cauſe, they cannot yeild to a ſubſcription thereof: till either by a ſolemne Debate about it (as of the Covenant) or otherwiſe; the Scruples of their Conſcience be taken away.

Sect.6. Concerning the ſnare laid by Superiours before their Subjects; and the priviledges redounding from thence upon the Government it ſelf; it is not offered as a Scruple, but rather as a warning to thoſe that are in Power; that they ſhould not imitate the Epiſcopall ſeverity and perſecution in King *James* his dayes, and in later times, whereby they laid the foundations of enſuing evils to themſelves and their people: and that they ſhould not act a gainſt their profeſſed Principles, in having no reſpect unto tender

Sect.7. Conſciences.

Sect.8. From all which premiſſes, they inferre a concluſion by way of ſupplication, put up to thoſe that are in preſent Power, that they may not be compelled, either to draw reproach upon Religion, and vilifie the Reputation of their Miniſtery, or to ſuffer ſo high a penalty, as to be out-lawed of their Birth-right for not ſubſcribing the Engagement.

SECT. III.

What ſtrength of Reaſon is to be found in the matter of theſe Propoſals to draw on their concluſion.

The main concluſion of the Propoſals. THe concluſion, which the Propoſers inferre upon theſe Propoſals, is this; We beſeech you conſtraine us not to take the Engagement by any puniſhment; but ſuffer us to be in ſafety under your protection; although we ſubſcribe not the Engagement, as you require us to do.

If the rationall ground of this demand be inquired into, it will be found to ſtand in the arguments, which make good theſe three aſſertions.

1. That

1 That we ought not to ſubſcribe the Engagement.

2 That you ought not to puniſh us for non-ſubſcription.

3 That we ought to have our birth-right, which is the benefit of the Laws of the Nation, and your protection to that effect, though we ſubſcribe not. *And three Branches of it.*

If the Reaſon of the firſt aſſertion be asked, *viz.* Why ought you to ſubſcribe the Engagement.

The Anſwer will be this; becauſe we are ſtreighted in Conſcience, upon the Caſes incident to the Engagement, and cannot ſubſcribe it without doubting; which to do, in us would be ſin by the Apoſtles Rule, *Rom.* 14. *The Argumens proving the firſt Branch.*

What is the cauſe of your doubting?

The cauſe of our doubting is, 1. The ſenſe of the Engagement importing things greatly different from that, which we conceive to be our duty in reſpect of the preſent eſtabliſhment. 2. The ſeeming violation of our former Oaths. 3. And the matter of grievous ſcandall, which will be given to all ſorts of people, againſt the Goſpel and our perſons and miniſtery therein: if we be counted perjured in our former Oaths; which rather then to ſuffer, and to make the glorying of our Miniſtery void, we ſhould reſolve to dye.

For all which reaſons (ſay they) we ought not to ſubſcribe this Engagement; becauſe to our thought, theſe are the conſequences of the ſenſe imployed therein; nor can theſe inconveniences as to us be removed, except the conſiſtency of this Engagement with the former Oaths be made unqueſtionably evident.

If the Reaſon of the ſecond aſſertion be asked of them, *viz.* Why the Rulers of the State ought not to puniſh them for non-ſubſcription? The Anſwer will be this; becauſe Governours though in higheſt Authority are bound to avoid the laying of ſnares and ſtumbling-blocks in the way of their brethren: and if theſe that are over us now, ſhould do as our former Governours did, to impoſe enſnaring Oaths upon godly people, and enforce their ſubſcriptions thereunto; they may by that meanes in the beginning of their Government, lay the unhappy foundations of enſuing troubles, to themſelves and their people; as King *James* and *Charles*, and the Biſhops in former times have done. *The Argument proving the ſecond Branch.*

And

And then another reaſon why the Subſcription ought not to be enforced with a puniſhment; is becauſe the profeſſed-Principles and reſolutions of theſe that are in preſent power are to have reſpect to tender conſciences, which in this caſe would not be regarded; if without conſiderations of theſe ſcruples a puniſhment ſhould be inflicted upon the non-ſubſcribers of the Engagement.

And if it be objected: but what aſſurance can the Governours of the State have of the non-ſubſcribers peaceable converſation? The Anſwer is.

1. That the many years experience of the good behaviour, and faithfull ſervice of the Non-ſubſcribers ought to be taken as a better ſecurity for their peaceable diſpoſition, then a fained ſubſcription which many yield unto.

2. That they plead for a forbearance from Subſcription only, till by a ſolemne debate, or otherwiſe; their conſcience ſhall be cleared of their important ſcruples.

The Arguments proving the third Branch.

If laſtly, the reaſon of the third aſſertion be asked, *viz.* Why ought you to have the benefit of the Law, and our protection to that effect, though you ſubſcribe not to be true and faithfull to the Common-wealth? The Anſwer will be this.

1. Becauſe we have been faithfull all along to the Parliament, till now of late theſe ſtumbling-blocks are come in our way.

2. Becauſe we have been ſufferers with you, and as much as any in the cauſe of Liberty and Reformation.

3. Becauſe we adhere ſtill to our firſt principles upon which you did undertake to give us protection.

4. Becauſe we do promiſe to maintain the Peace of the Nation, and to pay obedience to the Laws thereof, whereof we crave the benefit.

5. And becauſe notwithſtanding all our former Oaths and Engagements; yet we acknowledge not onely the neceſſity of a civill Government in generall, for the preſervation of humane ſociety, and the prevention of out-rages which wicked men unreſtrained would do to thoſe that are peaceable; but we conſider alſo in particular, this Government which Gods providence hath ſet up over us, to be that under which we ought to live quietly and peaceably in our Callings, and to which we will ſubmit in all

all things lawfull and neceſſary for common ſafety, without diſputing the Right and Title, by which it ſtandeth; and ſeeing this is the duty, which we are willing to performe, we crave the protection due to ſuch as behave themſelves after this manner, although we ſubſcribe not that Engagement, which we conceive is greatly different from the tenor of theſe duties.

This may be conceived to be the full ſtrength and Rationality of their Plea: whereunto what by way of anſwer may be ſaid; ſhall afterwards diſtinctly appear in the Re-propoſals, and in the diſcovery of the way of ſatisfaction, to be given hereunto.

Sect. II.

What the ſtraine of Chriſtianity is, which in the manner of the Propoſall is followed.

THe manner and way of propoſing theſe matters, as to Chriſtianity ſeems without offence; the expreſſions being humble, modeſt, proper and grave; the point of ſcruple ſolicitous, open and plain; and the matter of their profeſſed Reſolution, without vanity or preſumption, ſad and ſerious, and although the Title Page, (if it be ſuppoſed that the Propoſers of theſe doubts were alſo the Publiſhers thereof; and that the Title Page was appointed by them to be made as it is) may ſeem to contain ſomething contradictory to the Propoſals themſelves; ſomething unconformable to Chriſtianity, and ſomething offenſive to the ſuperiour Powers, which governe us at preſent; yet it is more ſuitable to charity, to think that ſome inconſiderate Zelot; rather then any conſiderable company of learned and pious Miniſters of the Goſpel was the Publiſher thereof, and the Author of the Title Page; for it is not likely, that any true Miniſters of Chriſt in a matter of ſuch concernment, whiles they pretend to humility in their Propoſals; would at the publiſhing thereof, claime to themſelves the high Titles, of *Learned* and of *Devines*: then which nothing almoſt could be counted more preſumptuous in them, nor could any ſting be found more injurious

That the things propoſed, as to the matter and manner of utterring the ſame, is not at all offenſive.

But that the Title Page, and the publication of the Propoſals, is offenſive, if publiſhed by the Authors of the Propoſals themſelves.

rious to wound the Authority of their Rulers withall; then to brand their publick Conſultations, and the deſignes which they have for common ſafety; with the Character which is given in *Pſal.* 64. 5. to perſecuting wicked Atheiſts; *viz. That they commune of laying of Snares privily.*

But if any of themſelves ſhould have put forth theſe their own Propoſals; with theſe high commendations of themſelves; and with ſo much deſpight againſt their Superiours, to whom they ſeem willing to be humble ſutors for a favour; then it may be judged not onely indiſcretion and vanity; but malicious Hypocriſie (even againſt the very matter and ſcope of their own Propoſals) in him (whoſoever he is) that hath thus done it. For if this ſtinging expreſſion *(that they commune of laying of Snares privily)* be the true meaning of the Propoſers of theſe matters; and their poſitive judgment of the way of thoſe to whom they offer their Propoſals; it is apparent, that by the publiſhing thereof, they have none other aime, but under a faire pretence of Reaſon and Humility; to commend themſelves unto the diſcontented multitude, as learned and Pious Divines; and under that notion, to foment in the popular weak apprehenſions, the plauſible prejudices, which the change of publick affaires hath begotten againſt the perſons and the proceedings of their Governours: which to cover, ſtrengthen and inſinuate under a Cloak of Religionſneſſe and a Colour of ſtraitneſſe of Conſcience, is as far from the truth of Chriſtianity, as that which to God and Men is moſt abominable and hatefull.

It ought therefore to be far from our thoughts, to ſuſpect that any pious Miniſters of *Jeſus Chriſt* (who will one day reveal the ſecrets of all hearts) ſhould be acceſſary to any ſuch contrivance; but how far the Publiſher may be guilty thereof, and what a prejudice he hath caſt thereby upon the Propoſals themſelves, and what a jealouſie he hath raiſed againſt the ſingle aime and Chriſtian intent thereof it to be left unto his own Conſcience to be weighed in the preſence of God. It ſhall no way in the leaſt degree foreſtall my judgement in the conſideration of the matters themſelves by way of Re-propoſals, nor my affection in the manner of repreſenting the ſame to find a way of ſatisfaction thereunto.

SECT.

SECT. V.

What thoſe who have ſubſcribed the Engagement, may juſtly Re-propoſe unto theſe Propoſals.

THe Miniſters throughout this Nation, who have judiciouſly and conſcionably; as a matter of duty taken the Engagement, may juſtly repreſent and Re-propoſe to thoſe, who ſeem offended at them for ſo doing, this which followeth; ſomewhat in imitation of their own ſtyle, and in Anſwer to theſe Propoſals.

We Miniſters of the Goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt, who have all of us from the beginning, ſought faithfully the Common good of the Nation, and ſerved therein the Parliament, for the purſuance of the neceſſary ends of juſt Liberty and Reformation; and have ſuffered heretofore many grievous things, in our Names and Eſtates from the common enemy; and are now (eſpecially ſuch of us as are poſted up) like to become ſufferers of the like or worſe things from our Brethren, and friends hereafter. Yet to this day we do conſtantly adhere to our firſt Principles; and are not ſtaggered, either in reſolutions or endeavours, to maintaine in our places and ſtations the Peace of this Nation, and to pay obedience to the Laws thereof. We conceive it our Duty in ſuch a time as this, by all wayes of juſtice, of dutifulneſſe, and of Chriſtian freedom with humility; to preſerve our inward Peace and outward ſafety, by keeping a good Conſcience, in the caſe of the preſent Engagement; which we being required to take, and to ſubſcribe could not refuſe to do as finding our ſelves obliged thereunto, as to a Duty whereof we can give this rationall account to all that ſhall deſire to know, what our grounds are for doing the ſame.

who the ſubſcribers of the Engagement are.

The grounds & inducements of their ſubſcription to the Engagement.

First, We have taken and ſubſcribed this Engagement; becauſe we hold our ſelves ſtill bound, by our former ſolemne Covenants and Engagements, (as taken by us in that ſenſe, which their expreſſe words do undoubtedly declare; which is moſt clearly ſutable to their main ends of publick Peace and Safety; and wherein it is at this time poſſible and lawfull for us to obſerve them)

1 Becauſe the former Engagement oblige them to uphold the foundation of Civill Government.

to uphold the grounds of Civill Government in this Land; for the preservation of humane society, and prevention of all those evils, which the outrages of wicked men un-restrained would produce therein; which is the whole effect of this Engagement.

2 Because God hath altered by by an extraordinary way, the Government of this State, from a Kingdom to a Commonwealth, whereunto obedience is due.

Secondly, Upon mature deliberation we did perceive; that the wise and holy Providence of God, (whose Judgments are unsearchachable, and wayes past finding out) hath at this time agains and beyond all mens former thoughts and expectations, shaken the foundations of this State, as it was a Kingdom, and disabled that way of Government and all that depends thereon, from affording any protection and preservation to any of the Inhabitants of this Land; and hath inabled another forme of Government to afford it; Wherefore we did conclude from the light of nature, from the judgement of the Learned; from the practise of Christians in former ages; from our own Principles; and from our former Engagements; that it was the wil of God, we should quietly and peaceably set our selves in our places and callings, to live under this Government; and to submit to it, in such things as are imposed upon, or required of us, by the Powers which are in actuall possession; being things in themselves lawfull and necessary, or expedient to the preservation of our selves and others.

3 Because obedience is due to the publick power, without disputing their Title.

Thirdly, because although we found others making a question of the way, how those who governe at present are come to the helme; yet we conceived that in this case of the Engagement, we were bound without disputing the right or title of those that are in place of Magistracy; to declare our willingnesse to be true and faithfull to the Common-wealth of this Nation, which now doth stand without a King and House of Lords: because we found this clear duty included in the obvious sense thereof.

4 Because the words of the Engagement are not to be otherwise interpreted then as they contain a clear duty.

Fourthly, because we clearly conceive, that there is no difference at all between ~~the~~ the submission which the Authours of the Proposals themselves rightly acknowledge to be due to the Powers, which are in actuall possession, and that which is required by the subscription to this Engagement: for seeing the expresse words of the Engagement give no ground, to interpret

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the Act of ſubſcription, beyond that which is a clear and known duty: therefore we think it not (as to our Conſciences) warrantable for to interpret it otherwiſe; but we rather think it contrary to a known duty, to make of a thing in it ſelf lawfull and neceſſary at this time, any ſcrupulous interpretation beyond what the words import; or to ſuſpend obedience from a duty, upon the conjecture of ſomething which may be thought undutifull, when that which is to our Conſcience a known duty is apparent. Upon which ground we declare, that we trouble not our ſelves, nor do we think it lawfull to ſtagger others in their thoughts: with the inferences which the Propoſers make upon the Subſcription of the Engagement, with Reference to theſe *Queries*.

And the Propoſers interpretation of the Engagement is undutifull.

As how far it doth imply an approbation of the manner of the preſent eſtabliſhment; Whether as effected by full and free Authority yea or no? whether yea or no, it doth imply an active Concurrence, and a ratifying conſent of the People thereunto, further then what hath been already acknowledged to be due to the Powers in actuall poſſeſſion; by all that are in ſubjection under them, and depend upon their protection? and whether yea or no, and how far it faſtens an obligation to act to the ſtrengthening and promoting of the Government, which is at preſent, or may be hereafter eſtabliſhed by the advantage of poſſible power? we ſay, that to trouble our own, or other mens weaker Conſciences, with theſe or ſuch like doubtfull Conjectures to colour the ſuſpenſion of our own, or occaſion the averſion of other mens affections from yielding obedience to a clear and confeſſed duty, is not only prepoſterous and contrary to the aime of healing breaches, and of advancing a publick good in this time of diſtraction; but inconſiſtent (as to our reaſon) with the obvious meaning of the words, which are to be ſubſcribed, and diſagreeing (as to our affections) with the Charity due, no leſſe to ſuperiours, then to other men, which is, not to thinke evill when good may be thought of them. And laſtly, it is oppoſite (as to our ſpirits) unto that wiſedome which is from above (the Rule of our walking) teaching us; to have pure and peaceable thoughts in all our actings; to performe duties in Godly ſimplicity, and without worldly wiſedome; to be gentle

Reaſons why none ſhould interpret the Engagement as the Propoſers do.

1 Cor. 13. 5.

2 Cor. 1. 12.

James 3.17. gentle and eaſily intreated, to do good works without partiall ſcrupulosity, and without hypocriſie.

And upon theſe principles of true wiſdom (which we humbly conceive are not laid to heart, by our Brethren in the third Paragraph of their Propoſals) we profeſſedly wave all thoſe ſcruples and the ſtumbling-blocks, which they have laid to themſelves, and wherewith they have puzled others, upon this clear Account; that when ever the conſiderations of theſe things, which are ſaid to be implyed in the Subſcription (which we ſee not) ſhall come before us, to be circumſtantially conſidered for the edification of others, or the clearing of our own way; we then ſhall be moſt ready to declare our ſenſe therein, according to known principles and the Circumſtances, which God ſhall offer; but in the mean time we think it anſwerable to the Duty of Chriſtianity, that we ſhould acquieſce in this plain and generall Reſolution; that whatſoever hereafter ſhall appear to us in any of theſe doubtfull Caſes to be a truth, or a duty; to be aſſerted or performed, for the good of the Common-wealth (under what forme, or without what form ſoever we find it eſtabliſhed) we ſhall hold forth the ſame freely in word and deed towards all, behaving our ſelves therein accordingly in a peaceable manner. Becauſe to do otherwiſe, we think it ſo far from following a known Rule of Chriſtianity in uprightneſſe and ſimplicity, that it tends to nothing elſe but a prejudicate fore-ſtalment of our own and other mens thoughts, by the laying of ſnares and ſtumbling-blocks before them.

The thing then which we re-propoſe to our Brethren is this.

An anſwer to the 3 Sect. of the Propoſals, by way of Repropoſall.

That as we ingenuouſly conceive there is no difference at all between the things which they themſelves have mentioned to be duties of Subjects to Superiours, and the ſubſcription required by the preſent Authority to the obvious ſenſe of the Engagement: So we ſay to that which they call a difference, that notwithſtanding this Subſcription, it is free for us in Conſcience to think differently of the manner of the Eſtabliſhment, according to that which our judgement and light doth or ſhall dictate unto us in reference to changeable circumſtances, if onely at all times, and in all circumſtances however changeable; we engage

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our truth and faithfulneſſe towards the publick good of the Commou-wealth under the ſame, whence we do acknowledge, that upon this Engagement theſe conſequences will follow, as to our Conſciences.

Firſt, That we are bound to approve of the preſent eſtabliſhment, ſo far as the manifeſtation of our truth and faithfulneſſe to the Common-wealth, doth oblige us in our places to follow quietly our own Callings, whether the Authority over us be full and free or no.

Secondly, That we ought not to ſuſpend and deny our active concurrence and ratifying conſent to any thing which in the preſent eſtabliſhment ſhall be offered and found lawfull and neceſſary for common ſafety, being offered to us by the Authority, which is, eſpecially becauſe it is declared, that the Originall of all juſt power is in the People: therefore concerning that our conſent is required hereunto, (as being ſome of the People) we judge it our duty in this ſenſe to give it, leaſt we become acceſſary to the cauſes of diſturbing our preſent peace or future ſettlement.

Thirdly, That we ought to be obliged in things lawfull and neceſſary and expedient for common ſafety to act at all times, in all places and capacities, to the promoting and ſtrengthening of the Eſtabliſhment which Gods providence hath ſet over us, and he hath inabled to afford us juſt protection.

And ſeeing by this Engagement, we think not our ſelves bound up by any words expreſſed therein; to the particulars: *(Of a full and free Authority, of the conſent of the People, and of the ſtrengthening of another eſtabliſhment, which may ſet it ſelf up, &c.)* implyed and mentioned in the Propoſals: but mean to declare by our ſubſcription, thus farre only as we have ſaid, our *approbation of*, our *ratifying conſent unto*, and our *obligation towards* the preſent Eſtabliſhment: therefore we conceive not that we do violate any of our former Oaths, Proteſtations or ſolemne League and Covenant, whereunto by the former Commands of Parliament, we actually were, or implicitely could be obliged. But we remember very well, and conſider concerning the Covenant; both the time when, and the manner how, and the matter whereunto we were engaged by it; and the ſenſe

Re-proſall to the 4 Sect. of the Propoſals relating to the breach of Covenant.

ſenſe wherein we then took it, and the aſſeverations that we ſhould never be drawn from it by any terrour or combination whatſoever; and the durable obligation brought upon our ſelves by it, even all the dayes of our life; and the conſideration which we had before our eyes in the taking of it; namely, the Glory of God in the firſt place; the advancement of the Kingdome of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, in the ſecond place; and the happineſſe of the King, and his Poſterity, as ſubordinate, and in order thereunto (by the liberties of the Nation preſerve) in the third place; all which things, as we did formerly, ſo we do ſtill duely conſider: and find by the changeableneſſe of publick affaires upon circumſtances, which Gods providence hath ordered for judgement over ſome, and for mercy towards others; and by the unſuitableneſſe of the late Kings wayes with the Kingdom of Jeſus Chriſt, and the inconſiſtency of his courſe with the publick welfare of this Nation: that the preſent frame of the State which now is, though different from what then was, hath not been ſet up by any breach of Covenant: and that the Engagement whereinto we are entered, to be *true and faithfull to this Common-wealth, as it now is* (viz.) *eſtabliſhed without a King, and Houſe of Lords*, hath nothing at all inconſiſtent with the former Engagements; or doth give us the leaſt cauſe to carry about with us a conſcience (as to theſe things) trembling and doubtfull, becauſe we finde our ſelves free from all guilt of the leaſt intention of violating any former promiſes, in things which are poſſible and lawfull to be done by us in our places; which were unalterable Conditions of all humane promiſes at all times preſuppoſed and implyed therein.

Relating to the parity of reaſon, ſaid to be between the Engagement to King and Lords, without Commons, and to the Commons without King and Lords.

Nor is there now (to our underſtanding) any parity of reaſon; in that which we at this time do, to that which would have been if we had done the like in time paſt: for although it would have been undoubtedly inconſiſtent with our Covenant at that time; when King, Lords and Commons made up a Parliament, to have ſubſcribed any Engagement to the King & Lords (if it ſhould by their agreement and authority have been required of us) without the Commons of *England*, becauſe the Covenant did expreſly ſubordinate the relation which we had to the King and Lords, unto the relation which we had to the Common-wealth, yet now it

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not be underſtood to be inconſiſtent with the tenor thereof (when there is no King nor Houſe of Lords in being) to be without them engaged to the Common-wealth: becauſe we never underſtood our ſelves otherwiſe engaged, nor could we juſtly by any Covenant or Oath whatſoever be otherwiſe engaged to them; but in order to the Common-wealth, and as they were true and faithfull to the ſame. Therefore there is no parity of reaſon in that, which then would have been to that which now is; neither in reſpect of the fundamentall relation of being equally engaged to them, and to the Common-wealth: nor in reſpect of the comparative relation, in caſes of diviſion and oppoſition, which was our condition a while ago: nor in reſpect of the preſent circumſtances of our eſtabliſhment, wherein there is none other Power and Authority viſible, but that of the Commons in Parliament, as Repreſentatives to that Common-wealth; to which at all times, in all caſes and capacities, we find our ſelves undoubtedly obliged to be true and faithfull; that is to ſay, willing and active to procure the Peace, the Safety, the Plenty, and the Welfare of this Nationall Society, in a Parliamentary way, whether it be with, or without a King and Houſe of Lords: nor can any juſt deſire of the perſonall proſperity of a man capable of being on a Throne, or of men called Lords, (which yet we do not wiſh any ſhould be deprived of in what is their juſt due) be juſtly laid in the ballance by us, with that faithfulneſſe which we owe to the whole Common-wealth: nor can the preſent want of them, or any thing which they can claim juſtly, prejudice the truth of our affection, towards the publick weale of the Nation in a way without them, no more then their preſence heretofore did take us off from aiming at the ſame publick weale of the Nation, by the way wherein they formerly ſtood. There can be therefore no parity of reaſon found, why the Engagement to the one ſhould ſway with us as much as to the other, although the King, and Lords Houſe were in being, which the former Engagements did preſuppoſe: but now this preſuppoſall failing without our guilt, and by their own miſcarriages againſt the Common-wealth, all the Engagements by which we were bound unto them, are *ipſo facto*, made void; and our preſent Engagement to the Common-wealth, and Parliam. therein, is ſtill the ſame which it was; nor could any Covenant or

Oath ever alter it, nor did any of ns ever intend to infringe it.

The Re-propoſal to the 5 Sect. of the Propoſals relating to matters of offence and ſcandall.

Therefore we ſhall further re-propoſe unto theſe Propoſers almoſt in their own words, that theſe things being thus conſidered (as we conceive them to be truths clear and unqueſtionable to all rationall mens capacities) in the nature of this Engagement; and in the full relation wherein it ſtands to former Engagements, cannot in our judgements miniſter the leaſt matter of ſcandall or offence to any man whatſoever, either good or bad: who although they are not able to make, or happily ſo much as to underſtand ſubtile diſtinctions, (for we make none, nor need we to ſeek for any) whereby guilt may either be evaded or palliated; yet we hardly can imagine that any will be ſo irrationally and unconſcionably injurious to us, as to look upon us as breakers of our Oaths and Covenants in this caſe; or as prevaricators of the moſt ſacred and ſolemne things; or as men of ductile ſpirits unto evill; for to be ductile to our duty is our glory) or of proſtituted conſciences, or led by Principles of fear or intereſt, which prejudices (ſeeing it cannot be denied, that they are onely founded upon the ignorance and miſtakes of ſome men; and upon the malicious informations and wrongfull ſuggeſtions of others, and not upon any ſolid or juſt reaſons: therefore they) do groſly wound the Goſpell; and ſuch as raile at us, or poſt us to be perſecuted; and proclaime us to be perjured, wrong us their innocent brethren, and expoſe our Miniſtry to ſcorn, (the honour whereof ought to be dearer to us then our lives) endanger the reputation, and ſo weaken the power of it in the conſcience of our hearers (who in theſe times of diſtraction are ſoon perſwaded to have low thoughts of their Miniſters; chiefly when Miniſters themſelves ſtudy to make one another contemptible) as that it needs muſt be believed, that both Chriſt, and the State alſo, will be greater looſers by their diſorderly carriage againſt the ſubſcribers of the Engagement, then either they, or any body elſe, can be gainers by their non-ſubſcribing of it.

And relating to Paul's example and reſolution.

We ſhall deſire alwayes with our Brethren, and we hope no leſſe then they, to keep in mind the noble reſolution of the Apoſtle, who would not in caſe of ſcandall uſe his own juſt power, but choſe freely to ſuffer all outward inconveniences to himſelfe rather then to hinder the Goſpell of Chriſt; concluding that it

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was better for him to die, then that any in that behalfe ſhould make his glorifying void: but he never choſe to neglect any part of a neceſſary Duty, for fear of any Kings or Lords diſpleaſure; or for the apprehenſion of any juſt reproaches, to be caſt upon himſelf by other men, although perhaps Brethren, he was reſolved, and did conclude in this caſe, to go through evill aud good report, and rather to ſuffer bonds and death, then not to proceed in the work of his Calling according to his Conſcience: nor could any Combination of few or of many brethren together take him of from ſuch a reſolution; although otherwiſe in matters free to be done, or to be left undone as might tend to edification, he was of a moſt ductile ſpirit, and of a moſt facile and yielding diſpoſition. 1. *Cor.* 9. 19. 20. 21. 22.

Acts 20. v. 23. 24. & chap. 21 v. 11, 12, 13. Acts 21. v. 20. ti l 27.

We ſhall therefore again ſay with the Propoſers in our Caſe; that upon theſe and ſuch like grounds purely conſciencious, and not out of any private intereſt or deſign; but for the manifeſtation of our affection towards the peace of this Common-wealth we were not neceſſitated to forbear, but were free to yield obedience to the Subſcription which was required of us. And although now we need not for our own ſatisfaction, to deſire any debate about the Engagement; yet if any ſhall deſire a friendly conference with us about theſame, we ſhall no manner of way decline it, but rather further it on our parts, that it may be rightly ordered unto edification.

And to the grounds of conſcience.

And to the motion of a Treaty

As concerning the enſnaring Oaths, and Subſcriptious offered by former Governours; we truly deſire they may be duly conſidered, and that the juſt judgement of God brought upon thoſe, who without reſpect to tender Conſciences did preſſe them, and lay them as ſtumbling-blocks before their Brethren, may be apprehended and feared; but we conceive, that the requiring of a generall promiſe from Subjects, to performe an undeniable and unqueſtionable Duty to the Communalty wherein they live by theſe that have the power of affording, or refuſing Civill protection to them, is not of the ſame nature with thoſe former Oaths and Subſcriptions, which former Governours did require; for the former did relate unto Matters of Religious Concernment; and not unto Matters meerly Civill, as this latter

Re-propoſall to the 6 Sect. relating to enſnaring Oaths.

doth; and then it is one thing to ſeek advantages againſt thoſe whom he would entrap: (which was the Epiſcopall deſigne in their Canons) and another thing, to lay the foundation of mutuall truſt and confidence, between thoſe that are to make up one Body Politick together; For as this ſubſcription doth tend to nothing in it ſelf, but this: ſo we are confident, that it is not propoſed to any other end; Therefore we are full of hope, that none will ſmart for it; but ſuch as are wilfull diſturbers of the publick Peace and ſafety: and that none may be found in ſuch a Category, our work ſhall be to gaine all men to their Duties, by a clear conviction of their underſtanding concerning the Truth, and faithfulneſſe which they owe to the Publick: nor ſhall we delight to make any odious, for not ſubſcribing towards thoſe that are in Authority, as we are made odious towards the multitude for diſcharging our conſcience in ſubſcribing; but we ſhall rather condole with ſuch, as conſcionably abſtaine from ſubſcribing; being grieved, that by their own default in Duty, or weakneſſe, they ſhould be caſt upon the ſad Dilemma, either to be lyable to the diſpleaſure and juſt jealouſie of their Superiours; or to be under the trouble of their own Spirits; which the fear aſwell of ſinning, as of chuſing affliction doth bring unto men of Conſcience and ingenuity: and that theſe inconveniences may be avoided, we ſhall one the one hand pray and intercede for them; that the many yeares experience of their quiet behaviour and faithfull ſervices may be accepted towards a juſt degree of ſecurity, and aſſurance for future peaceableneſſe: and on the other hand, we ſhall alſo exhort and intreat, that as none ſhould ſubſcribe faignedly to the profeſſion of their duty: ſo all may do it ſincerely; but eſpecially ſuch, as hitherto hath been faithfull to the Cauſe; and amongſt all theſe moſt chiefly, ſuch as ſtand piouſly for the Teſtimony of *Jeſus*, either in the Claſſicall or Congregationall Miniſtery: leſt through their failing in this kind, ſome that watch for advantages againſt the Office of the Miniſtery it ſelfe; and from their leaſt haltings; make uſe of opportunities, to pour contempt upon the function; may not ſee their hearts deſire brought to paſſe againſt them.

Re-propoſall to the 7 Sect. relating to tender conſciences.

And to the way of ſecurity for peaceableneſs.

Thus then we, who are preſent, upon theſe conſiderations to our Conſciences ſatisfactory; and before all men juſtifiable, are free

free to ſubſcribe the Engagement as our Duty; do lovingly, as Brethren, beſeech thoſe that ſubſcribe it not, not to cenſure or aſperſe us (whoſe reputation is as neceſſary for others as a good Conſcience for our ſelves) to be men that draw reproach upon Religion, and vilifie the reputation of the Miniſtery, by which the ſervice of *Jeſus Chriſt* is advanceed; nor cauſe others to think of us, that we eſteem Oaths as changeable as Opinions, and ſo brand us with the odious marks of equivocation and prevarication, nor to ſubject us unto the contempt and hate of all, as men of looſe and uncertain principles; and we ſhall endeavour (ſo far as God ſhall give us favour with our Superiours) to procure to them, the grant of their equitable deſires; that none of them may be out-lawed, untill by wilfull violation of the Lawes they deprive themſelves of the protection, and forfeit the benefit thereof; which we ſhould be exceeding ſorry for their and the Goſpels ſake, to perceive in any of them.

Re-propoſall to the 8 Sect. concluding the whole matter.

Sect. VI.

What courſe may be taken to give theſe Scruplers full ſatisfaction.

IN the fore-going Section, the Subſcribers have apologized for themſelves, and I have ſaid in their Name, that which I am perſwaded all may, and moſt will aſſent unto; to wipe off the *odium*, and foul aſperſions which are caſt upon them for their forwardneſſe to do their duty. Now I ſhall humbly offer ſomething further towards the ſatisfaction of theſe Scruplers; that if the Re-propoſals of the Subſcribers, clear not their doubts ſufficiently; ſome other Overtures may not be wanting to eaſe them of the ſame, and induce them to the performance of their Duty.

If then, in Charity to them whom I eſteem brethren, and in Prudency to our ſelves, for the preſervation of publick Peace, by ſome mutuall aſſurance of fidelity between fellow-Subjects; it is expedient to think upon ſome ſatisfactory courſe, how to prevent further diviſions, and heale (if it be poſſible) our breaches: left

Why a courſe of ſatisfaction is to be aimed at.

leſt the Common enemy both of Religion and Liberty, get his fit opportunity, by co-operating with our failings, to ſet us a-worke to deſtroy each other, who together have co-operated hitherto in the common cauſe of Reformation, and juſt Liberty; If (I ſay) this be expedient to be thought upon, I would humbly ſuggeſt, towards the removing of theſe Scruples; whether conſcientiouſly by ſingle-hearted Brethren, or politically by ſome others who have double deſignes entertained; theſe enſuing Motions.

To ſatisfie ſcruplers, all their ſcruples muſt be firſt known.

1. Becauſe no man can poſſibly receive full ſatisfaction in any thing, except he will uncaſe himſelf, that all his doubtings may be known to thoſe that ſincerely ſtudy his content; therefore our Brethren who make theſe Propoſals are to be intreated to declare; whether yea or no theſe be all the ſcruples, which they have againſt the Subſcription to the Engagement; So that if theſe be removed, nothing will further hinder their Subſcription?

Then they themſelves ſhould declare the ſenſe of that which may give them ſatisfaction.

2. If theſe are all their ſcruples, and that nothing is further deſired but the removall thereof, then our Brethren are in the next place to be intreated further to declare; whether they have in their eye any way of clearing theſe doubts by which they conceive (as knowing themſelves beſt) their ſatisfaction if it were followed might ariſe, and wherein their Conſcience would acquieſce? As for example, whether a well-ordered Treaty, to remove miſ-underſtanding, and to determine, by known Principles matters of duty, will do it yea or no? or whether they conceive that nothing will ſatisfie their doubtings, and embolden them to ſubſcribe, but either ſuch a Declaration to be made by the ſupream power, upon the Engagement, as they ſhall reſt contented in; or elſe ſuch a liberty to put in their own cautions, their limitations of performance, and their interpretation of the ſenſe wherein they take it, that in a manner they ſhall have their own will wholly, without yielding any thing at all to the will of their Superiours, to give them ſatisfaction?

If they will not anſwer any of theſe *Queres*, but will keep a hidden reſerve of doubts; or if nothing but one of the two laſt Propoſals, will be eſteemed ſatisfactory: then it is evident, that in the Propoſers aime there is no ſincerity; for although they

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ſeeme by their Propoſals, to ſeeke ſatisfaction to themſelves, and a way of agreement with others; yet becauſe they manifeſtly obſtruct all the rationall meanes of clearing their own doubts; and refuſe to deale ingenuouſly towards the obtaining of an equitable ſatisfaction from others, in that wherein they pretend to be ſcrupled, it may juſtly be concluded, that theſe ſcruples are onely propoſed to colour a wilfull reſolution of non-ſubſcribing, and of ſtanding at a diſtance from under the preſent power; and that conſequently there is ſome further deſigne in hand as to State-affaires, tending to a future breach; which how beſeeming it may be to the humility and piety of ſuch as are called learned and pious Divines, to have a hand in, and what Conſcience it will be in them to cover it with the maſk of tenderneſſe of Conſcience; I ſhall leave to the judgement of all ſingle hearted Chriſtians to determine.

what to be judged of the Scruplers, in caſe they will not declare themſelves to the matters forementioned.

It is a ſad thing to conſider, how far ſome men, who want not parts, and who undoubtedly are truly Godly for the main: are led ſometimes (in the agitation of the affaires, wherein a party which they do affect is intereſſed) away from the ſimplicity of the Goſpel to play the Politicians, and it is neither well credible to others, nor at all diſcernable by themſelves: how far when once they begin to warpe from the way of Chriſtian ſimplicity, and pure love to their duty, the motions of their own paſſions, the plots of other men, and the deſignes of oppoſition againſt thoſe whom they diſ-affect, will inſinuate themſelves into their very Conſciences, under the pretence of Piety and Zealouſneſſe for Religion; which they falſly firſt imagine to be the cauſe they have in hand, and then in favour of this imagination they raſhly licenciate themſelves unto many things, whereof in the day of their account, they will be troubled to find a juſtifiable Acquittance.

How it comes to paſs that ſome Miniſters play the Stateſmen.

But ſuppoſing as I ought to do, that in theſe Propoſers there is nothing under the deck, but that in this modeſt and diſcreet way, the plain truth and all the truth of their grievances, at the ſubſcription is repreſented above board, I ſhall now point at the meanes, which in a faire Treatie, I conceive may produce unto them ſo much ſatisfaction, as in equity they can deſire; That they may have cauſe to deale ingenuouſly either by accept-

In caſe the ſcruplers be plain dealing men, what ought to be their behaviour in reference to a Treaty.

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ing of that which is offered, if it may be procured, or by excepting againſt it, if it ſeem not ſatisfactory; in which laſt caſe, I think it would be fair dealing in them, not only to alleadge their reaſons, why they are not ſatisfied with what ſhall be offered; but alſo to make their own demands, wherein at leaſt they will reſt ſatisfied; for to lye only at the ward of excepting, is an unreaſonable poſture intreating between two equals, when both are alike concerned in a matter of difference, far more then it is unreaſonable when Subjects by a Treaty make their application toward Superiours, and ſeek to gain the favour of ſome equitable ſatisfaction from them in a matter of ſuch concernment; which imports no leſſe then either the loſſe or the aſſurance of all their outward protection and ſafety.

And ſeeing to ſtand alwayes on the excepting, and not at all on the offering or accepting hand, is a frame of ſpirit not onely unfriendly amongſt the Members of the ſame Communalty, but altogether unſutable to the profeſſion of Chriſtianity: and alſo moſt of all unbecoming the worke of the Miniſtery, and unproportionate to the wayes of peace and mutuall confidence amongſt brethren; therefore I ſhall not be ſo injurious as to ſuſpect any of them of any unwillingneſſe to treat in a faire way, nor ſhall I imagine, that any ſiniſtrous deſigne is hatched by the matter, and the propoſing of theſe Propoſals in the mind of a diſcontented party, to ſtrengthen the captious, carping, peeviſh, and excepting humour of the times. I ſay, I ſhall not ſuſpect any ſuch thing, although to a jealous eye; the matter thereof compared with the aime therein, and the covered cloſe way of diſperſing the ſame amongſt the doubtfull multitude; and at a time whiles petitions to gaine delayes, and reſpit for further reſolutions, are preſented to Superiours, may looke ſomewhat ſuſpitiouſly. Yet (I ſay) for all this I ſhall not ſuſpect that any deſigne contrary to peaceableneſſe, is fomented thereby in the affections of any: nor ſhall I wiſh, that upon the appearance of ſuch a cauſe of jealouſie any ſtrictneſſe ſhonld be uſed in the ſettlement of this buſineſſe; But I ſhall rather pray, perſwade and exhort, that on both ſides the open carriage of all matters, as in the preſence of God, may take away or prevent as well the appearance of ſubtile contrivances on the one hand, as the ſurmiſes thereof

thereof on the other: for both theſe equally blaſt the hopes of unity, and the grounds of amiable confidence in all men who are at a diſtance one from another; for which cauſe I ſhall be a moſt humble ſutor towards all ſides, that on all hands, not only a friendly Treaty may be ſet afoot, and chearfully aſſented unto; but that whiles matters of juſt ſcruples are taken into conſideration, therein to be reſolved by known and pre-determined rules; the matters of clear duty in the interim may not be ſuſpended or intermitted on either ſides, becauſe all our danger lies in the neglect of common known duties more then in any thing elſe: for if we would but do that which we confeſſe we ought to do, and which we wiſh others would do to us; there would be no doubt a ſpeedy healing of our breaches: nor can there any good reaſon be given why I ſhould ſuſpend to act a known duty in that wherein I am not ſcrupled, becauſe I ought to be left free to abſtain from acting in that wherein I am ſcrupled: that which in Chriſtianity is clear and poſitive, is alwayes to be intended before that which is dark and negative: nor may I with a good Conſcience, refuſe to follow the light which I have in the main of a duty, ſo far as it is practicable; becauſe I want ſome light in ſome circumſtantiall caſes, which may fall in, as to me, to be unpracticable. If therefore this ground can be laid and aſſented unto, that what ever we ſhall agree upon to be a clear and undeniable duty in Chriſtianity or Morality, ſhall be practiſed for it ſelfe, notwithſtanding all other differences or defects falling in among us, and that in the diſquiſition of matters we ſhall proceed alwayes firſt to determine that wherein we fully agree, before we mention matters of diſ-agreement; I am confident that we ſhall find ſo much cauſe of ſatisfaction and aſſurance in each others Reſolutions and Engagements of that kind, that the diffesent apprehenſions of matters which now ſeem extream; and through our mutuall miſtruſtings of each other, are like to be the utter ruine of both, will be found very inconſiderable, and ſuch as will be wholly ſwallowed up by the grounds of mutuall aſſurance which naturally reſults from every faithfull Engagement, to practiſe things wherein there is a full agreement between parties; for the not doing (as I ſaid before) of that which in our places we ſhould do with ſingleneſſe of heart,

Why matters of duty ſhould not be ſuſpended, but effectually intended during a Treaty, and notwithſtanding ſome differences.

without contradicting and conteſting one with another, about that wherein we ſuſpect each other (as aiming at that which we ſhould not do) is the Originall and great cauſe of all our diſtraction and unſettlement; which if we could intend to redreſſe and remove (*viz.* by overcoming evill with good; that is, the feares of evill deſigns and enterprizes with good motions and engagements unto unqueſtionable duties) there is no doubt but we ſhould find a cleare way to Peace and Reconcilement: this therefore in the courſe, which I would ſuggeſt to be followed, between thoſe that are ſcrupled at the Engagement, and thoſe that are not ſcrupled at it, in their friendly Conference and Treatie, *viz.*

Rom. 12. 21.

What things ſhould be handled in the Treaty, and in what order, if wee deal with men of ingenuity.

Firſt, Let matters of agreement be propoſed, underſtood and ratified in things Poſitive and Negative.

Secondly, Let there be a profeſſed Engagement, to practiſe that which is anſwerable unto their Agreements, and tending undoubtedly to edification between them.

Thirdly, Let matters of diſagreement both Poſitive and Negative be thought upon with theſe two cautions premiſed to prevent a breach.

Firſt, That no diſagreement in Judgment or Practiſe ſhal make void the dutifull Engagement, to follow joyntly the matters of Agreement.

Secondly, That to take away the offences which may ariſe upon the differences of opinions and practiſes, ſome Rules are to be pre-determined; whereby contentious Debates about the ſame may be prevented, and whereby the right uſe of Chriſtian, of Morall and of Rationall Freedome therein may be ſetled.

If therefore thoſe Pious and Learned Brethren, whoſe ſcruples againſt the Engagement being thus propoſed, have a great influence upon the minds of others, to make them ſcrupulous and diſaffected at it: if (I ſay) they would condeſcend to the Overture of ſuch a Treatie, (which hitherto ſome have not been willing to do) I am very confident through the bleſſing of Chriſt, that an Expedient would eaſily be found to ſettle their doubtfull thoughts; and ſo to make all others willing to yield unto their Superiours,

that

that ground of juſt aſſurance and acquieſcence, for which the Engagement by them popoſed is requiſite.

And this is the courſe, by which thoſe that are ingenuous may receive ſatisfaction, if they ſeek it as they ought; but if any doth ſcruple more through Policy then Piety, this courſe will not be liked of, becauſe it will croſſe their deſigne; which is, to keepe the mindes of the weaker ſort in a ſtaggering condition, that they may not cloſe to any ſettlement; but lye open to all manner of changes: I ſhall not charge any of the Authors of theſe Propoſals with any ſuch deſign; yet I cannot abſolve all of them from it; for I may as lawfully ſuſpect them in this matter as in any other matter I may do mine own heart, whereof although I know none evill; yet I ſhall do my ſelf no injury, to ſay, that yet there may be ſome mixture of deceitfulneſſe in it, when I thinke my meaning is at the beſt; For the Apoſtle himſelf would not take upon him to juſtifie himſelf in all things, *I know* (ſaith he) *nothing by my ſelf, yet I am not thereby juſtified; but he that judgeth me, is the Lord.* So I may without offence ſay, of the Propoſers of theſe ſcruples, that although I know nothing by them, but judge charitably that their ſcruples as to them are truly conſcientious yet I muſt alſo ſay, that thereby they are not juſtified from the mixture of collaterall deſignes; but that is the Lord who will judge them. The main of the buſineſſe may be truly a doubt of Conſcience; and yet the managing of it in the hands of ſome may be ſomewhat elſe; nor do I wrong the Chriſtian charity which I owe to all or any of them in this; becauſe it is lawfull for me to be jealous over them with godly jealouſie leſt by any meanes, as the Serpent beguiled *Eve* by his ſubtilty: ſo their minds ſhould be corrupted from the ſimplicity which is in Chriſt. And truly to look but upon the matter it ſelf, by comparing the former and latter parts of the Propoſals together, a doubt may be made thus, that ſeing the main ſcruple whereat they kick, is not ſo much againſt the duty expreſſed in the words of the Engagement: which is, *to be true and faithfull*, or againſt the Object of the Duty conſidered in it ſelf, which is *this Commonwealth*: or againſt the immediate qualifications of the Object and of the Duty; which are, *as it is now eſtabliſhed without a King and Houſe of Lords*, which are acknowledged to be the effects of Gods Providence; but onely againſt the act of ſubſcribing to the

But in dealing with men of policy this courſe will not take.

Why the ſcrupulers may be ſuſpected though not charged with policie.

1 Cor. 4. 4.

1 Cor. 11. 3.

whole in reference to ſome State-conſiderations and conſequences following thereupon; which tend to nothing elſe, but to ſuſpend the minds of men, and take them off from the regular performance of a preſent Duty, by the conjectural apprehenſions of doubtfull inconveniences which may enſue as to the State. Therefore it is not without a rationall ground of jealouſie; that although the matters propoſed, may be reall ſcruples of Conſcience, and rationally reflected upon by ſome without prejudice; yet that in this propoſing of them, as to the diſpoſition of the matter, to fetch about this form of ſpeech, the hand of *Joab* may alſo have been in it, for ſome ſelfe-intereſt of State.

2 Sam. 14. 19.

And this may be thought the more likely to be true, if we obſerve two things. Firſt, that the words of this Engagement (which are ſcrupled at, and ſaid to be contrary to former Engagements, and the Duties mentioned in the ſecond *Sect.*) are not at all once alleadged; to ſhew diſtinctly, wherein the mentioned contrariety doth ſtand; but the objection is made confuſedly againſt the Act of ſubſcribing to the words, according to that prejudice which the vulgar hath taken up againſt them in a generall notion. Herein then the ſubtilty of the Policy doth lye: that the matter ſhould be couched in ſuch a way, as doth moſt commodiouſly favour that notion, and ſtrengthen it: which in men of Learning, Conſcience and Piety, ſeeking a clearing of doubts, doth not ſeem to be faire and plaine dealing, and therefore may be thought to have ſomewhat of a Collaterall deſigne.

Secondly, we may obſerve alſo, that if the thing clearly profeſſed in the ſecond *Sect.* of the Propoſals to be a known duty, had been really intended, and reſolved upon to have been practiſed at this time no leſſe then in generall termes acknowledged to be a thing at ſome time lawfully practicable; there would not have been any inclination to do two things which here are done; not without ſome contrivance. Firſt, the performance of duties confeſſed to be due to ſuch Superiours, as are in places over us, and by a people in our caſe under them, would not have been *per indirectum* denied to be due by us unto them. Secondly, the words of the Engagement upon which the whole ſtreſſe of the ſcruple is ſaid to lye; and for which that which is confeſſed to be due to others is denyed to our Superiour Powers, would

not

not have been ſuppreſſed, and left in the dark as they are; but clearly mentioned and alleadged as they are not, leſt the falacy of the pretended ſcruple ſhould appear. For if the duty acknowledged in *Theſi*, had been applyed to the *Hypotheſis* of our preſent condition, and the duty required in the words of the Engagement had been compared therewith, the pretended matter of ſcruple, would by the full agreement of the one with the other, have been found apparently impertinent: but it may be conceived, that the matter is laid thus before the pre-poſſeſſed Reader, or weak diſcerner of ſuch contrivances; to the end, that upon a full acknowledgement of a juſt duty, and a willingneſſe to performe the ſame, in a caſe like to ours, the iniquity of that which is ſuppoſed to be required of us, by the Engagement; may be heightened in mens apprehenſions, who are eaſily ſwayed to receive the worſt impreſſions of thoſe that are in places of power over them: by how much then they ſeem to yield to a rationall duty, and be of an equitable diſpoſition towards their Superiours, by ſo much they prevaricate againſt the intention of the Engagement to make it to be thought altogether contrary to reaſon and to juſtice; by a ſlye concealing of the words, and a ſuſpitious interpretation thereof, ſuggeſted, as containing matters very far different from the acknowledged duty, and wholly oppoſite to former Engagements. Whereas in truth and deed, there is no ſuch thing aimed at by the Engagement, nor implyed in the words thereof. So that from the third Paragraphe of the Propoſals to the end thereof, the whole matter and contrivance of the diſcourſe may be thought (and yet without doing Injury to the Authours) nothing elſe but a Politicall Stratagem and Sophiſme grounded upon the miſ-application and miſ-interpretation of the Engagement and Covenant, to entangle weak and undiſcerning Conſciences; and to keep up the ſpirit of diſ-affection in the mindes of the multitude under the pretence of ſcruples of that kind.

And how their Politicall ſcrupoſity and conſcientious imaginations of this nature are to be ſatisfied in the generall.

The thing then to be offered to obviate the deceit of this politicall contrivance of the buſineſſe, and to give ſatisfaction (if it can be admitted) to this politicall ſcrupuloſity of Conſcience is this: that the words of the Engagement in their plain ſenſe; which imports a clear duty, are to be confronted with that which in the ſecond *Sect.* they confeſſe to be conſonant with the will

of

of God, with the light of nature, with the judgement of the Learned, with the practiſe of former Chriſtians, and with their own principles and former Engagements: and then if the Duty mentioned in the Engagement doth run wholly parallell, as the caſe now ſtands with us, to that which they yield to be a Duty as they State the caſe in generall themſelves; then they ſhould be made to reflect upon themſelves, that they ought to be ſatiſfied in this; that by taking the Engagement, nothing is farther required of them then what they proclaime themſelves, to be a performable duty in ſuch a caſe. But if their Politicall contemplations of the meaning of the Engagement, through the ſiniſter proſpectives & jealouſies which they toke up, and foment againſt their Superiours, by an uncharitable miſ-conſtruction of their aimes; will not ſuffer them to acquieſce in this paralleliſme of the Engagement, with what they acknowledge to be lawfull; then a further courſe may be taken, and ſhall be offered unto them, if they will intend to bring matters to a faire tryall and iſſue, and that is this: that the conſequences, which they ſay are implyed in the words of the Engagement, may be taken into conſideration and examined in three reſpects.

And alſo in particulars.

Firſt, How far the words of the Engagement, do import in the ordinary acception by an indifferent Judge, any ſuch matters, as they ſay are implyed therein.

Secondly, How far, if the words ſhould import any ſuch matters in any ſenſe, the performance of the Engagement in that ſenſe, is agreeable with the duties mentioned by themſelves in the 2. *Sect.* performable by Subjects towards their Superiours in the caſe they are ſuppoſed and wherein now we are.

Thirdly, How far the Covenant and former Engagements, will be contradictory or not contradictory to this Engagement, although the Conſequences here ſaid to be implyed therein, ſhould be granted to follow thereon.

In all which matters, if upon known grounds and principles of Chriſtianity and Rationality, a regular way of diſquiry may be followed, as it becometh Divines within their bounds, in reference to Conſcience, modeſtly, and not as it becometh Stateſmen, in reference to intereſts, ſuſpicicuſly, and if they will ingage to ſtand or fall to the iſſue of that diſquiry; I dare in the fear of God, undertake to let them ſee ſatisfactory grounds, whereby

whereby their ſcruples will be cleared, and wherein conſequently their Conſciences ought to acquieſce, if they will not ſubordinate the inclinations thereof to an affected ſcrupulosity for the love of a party. For that all this contrivance of the Propoſals, is like unto the hand of *Joab* in the mouth of the woman of *Tekoah*; to bring about a deſigne, rather then to receive a ſingle-hearted ſatisfaction for themſelves; is neither irrationall to think, nor uncharitable to ſay, but juſt and equitable in prudencie to ſuſpect: and here we have a clear example of a ſmooth and handſome conveyance of a State-buſineſſe under a miniſteriall cloak and pretence of Religiouſneſſe, not in, but out of the Pulpit; which is one of the things which in another larger Treatiſe, I have ſhewed to be one of the main cauſes of our preſent diſtempers and confuſions; namely, when Miniſters meddle with State-matters, either in their Pulpits as it were authoritatively, or out of the ſame more ſubtilly in ſuch a way, and to ſuch a purpoſe as this; therefore to rectifie the fundamentall errour of the aime and deſign of theſe Propoſals, as to State-Matters, let me referre the ingenuous Reader, but eſpecially theſe Learned and Pious Divines, to an unprejudicate peruſall of that Treatiſe; wherein if any ſhall ſhew me, that I have wronged the profeſſion, or unjuſtly taxed the practiſe of ſome, or miſtaken my way in ſeeking Peace & Truth, to heal our preſent breaches; I ſhall profeſſe my ſelfe to be very much beholding to him. Upon this whole matter then I ſhall profeſſe thus much; that although I thus trace in the Spirits of theſe Propoſers by the matter and contrivance of their Propoſals ſuch an inclination to meddle in State-affairs, which is unſuitable to their Calling; yet that I have no prejudice againſt them in my heart for ſo doing, nor do I intend, to faſten upon them any charge of falſe and fained pretences of being ſcrupled, otherwiſe then indeed they are (for I believe truly that they are thus ſcrupled, and puzzeled in Conſcience about their own imaginations concerning State-Matters, rather through weakneſſe and cuſtome, and want of a Rule to diſcern the motions of their own ſpirits, then through any ſet aime, to take upon them the management of State-Matters) but I look upon them, as the frame of their thoughts repreſents it ſelfe and them by their way unto me; whereof I have diſcovered the Rationality, the Chriſtianity and the Policy, to ſhew, that in all reſpects

2 Sam. 14.

ſatisfaction

satisfaction may be given them, if they desire it ingenuously; & that if their spirit by the deceitfulnesse of errour is led forth unadvisedly, in another way then they ought to walk in, that that also can be discovered; for there is nothing hid but it shall be revealed, and being revealed, a Rule may be found to rectifie what ever is [illegible] in. I shall therefore for mine own part, not refuse (if they will needs insist upon their Political scruple, and think that their consciences ought to be engaged, into those State-considerations) to deal with them upon their inferences from the words of the Engagement, which is their own Weapon only with this caution; that we shall not take upon us to become such absolute Judges, of the wayes of those that are in places of Magistracie, as to make our own interpretation of their wayes a Rule of all obedientiall dutifulness in our selves or other Subjects, to binde thereunto as to a Law, our conscience above Christianity and morality; and that in speaking of the actions and intentions of superiours we shall be no lesse charitable to them, then we wourd have others to be to us, or we should be to other men ruling in another place, in such occurrences of publick affairs, with this proviso, their scruples even upon such Political contemplations as they meddle with all, shall, if they please, be taken into consideration; although we shal be in very great danger to go beyond the line of our Calling, and every foot to go out of our way; which my chief study is in all these agitations of matters by known Rules to prevent which the Lord direct us by the light of his countenance, not only to intend; but also to do, to the advancement of his glory, & our mutual comfort in the way of Righteousnes. *Amen.*

F I N I S.

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The Printer to the Reader.

THe Treatise mentioned by the Author a little before the ending of this Discourse, is a large disquisition of the Rules, by which all debates amongst Christians in generall, may be agitated without offence; and by which in particular, our present controversies may be composed, by a full discovery of the duties of Magistrates and Ministers towards the publick, and to each other in our present distracting occasions, wherein few men study a Rule; but almost all are carryed by meer interests. Printed for *Richard Wodenothe*, at the Star under *Peters* Church in Cornhill, 1650